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ABSTRACT

Controversy exists in the field of child day care concerning the training of child care workers. Becker (1979) states that trainers should be child care professionals who help to engage workers in an educational/developmental process, as opposed to "outside" trainers from other professions who view training as a mechanism to "add on" skills such as conflict resolution or communication skills. On the other hand, Ouderkirk (1980) argues that competent trainers from outside the field can impart needed skills by using accepted methods of adult education. The purpose of this paper is to present evidence concerning the effectiveness of Becker's approach to training in conveying knowledge and in imparting ideas about child care practices. A statewide, decentralized program was conducted which used child care professionals as trainers and provided for the modification of course content to fit the needs of local providers. Almost 1,400 center and home providers in 57 counties were trained. Test data from pre/post program measures and trained/untrained group analyses, as well as behavioral observations, demonstrated program success. Findings also indicated an expansion of provider/community contacts and an increased sense of professionalism. In conclusion, this training approach is viewed as being both practical and effective. (Author/MP)

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An Effective Training Approach
for Child Day Care Providers

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Abstract

Controversy has arisen about who should train child care providers and how. A statewide, decentralized program is presented that emphasized the use of child care professionals as trainers and the modification of course content to fit the needs of local providers. Almost 1400 center and home providers were trained in 57 counties. The trainers, trainees, and program are described. Knowledge test data from pre-post and trained-untrained group analyses, as well as behavioral observations, demonstrated program success. Findings also indicated an expansion of provider-community contacts and an increased sense of professionalism. This training approach is viewed as practical and effective.

An Effective Training Approach For Child Day Care Providers

For those with an awareness of the complexity of development in the early years of life, the central role of the child's caregivers is incapable. Recent studies of the early development of children in day care have shown no harmful effects in settings where high-quality care is provided (Belsky & Steinberg, 1978; Etaugh, 1978; Rubenstein & Howes, 1979). An essential aspect of the dimension of quality is the sensitivity, skill, and knowledge of the day care provider. Training and professionalization are needed to change the role of providers in day care settings to a more advanced level than that of custodians. Results of the National Day Care Study suggest the impact of such child care training for providers: "Caregivers with education/training relevant to young children deliver better care with somewhat superior developmental effects for children" (Ruopp, 1979, p. 3).

There is controversy in the field concerning who should train child care workers and how. The arguments have been stated most explicitly for workers in residential child care. Becker (1979) states that trainers should be child care professionals who help to engage workers in an educational/developmental process, as opposed to "outside" trainers from other professions who view training as a mechanism to "add on" skills such as conflict resolution or communication skills. Becker worries that "proprietary and other training and consulting organizations" can use grantsmanship competence to obtain funding and packaged child care training materials to gain credibility, thus isolating the process of program development from

implementation. On the other hand, Ouderkirk (Ouderkirk & Becker, 1980) argues that competent trainers from outside the field can impart needed skills by using accepted methods of adult education. With constrained planning and implementation schedules, there may be a tendency for decision-makers to lean toward the latter approach and to use packaged curricula for training child care workers and day care providers.

The purpose of this paper is to present evidence concerning the effectiveness of the former approach to training (Becker, 1980⁷⁹) in conveying knowledge and in impacting providers' child care practices. The program and results of a statewide day care provider training program will be presented in which the use of child care professionals as trainers, and the importance of tailoring training to meet local needs, were emphasized.

Program Parameters

Organization. The master contractor for this Title XX-funded grant was an urban university that subcontracted with 15 institutions across the state of Michigan to conduct training. The requisites for each training course were: (1) a minimum of 20 training hours, (2) content selected from a list of 15 competency topics, (3) availability of college course credit, and (4) the development of local community linkages between providers and resources.

Trainers. The trainers hired by the subcontractors were child care professionals. Eighty-four percent had college degrees in fields related to the education of children. More than 87% had experience as day care home or center providers. More than half were members of professional organizations in the child care field.

Trainees. The providers enrolled (N=1423) were a heterogeneous group. Almost two thirds worked as providers in day care centers while the remainder

provided care for children in their homes. They were from varied ethnic backgrounds, with more than one fourth of those trained from minority groups. Most (84%) did not have a four-year college degree, although many had taken some college classes (35%).

Program. Although training resources were available, no specific curriculum or uniform training materials were mandated. Each subcontractor designed their courses to fit their own local training needs. Most used a structured classroom presentation including class discussion. Almost one fourth of the class meetings included an outside speaker. Such speakers were used to establish provider links to community agencies and resources.

Program Outcomes

Several outcome analyses were performed. First, a comparison was made between knowledge scores of trained home providers and a contrast group of untrained home providers who had indicated a desire for training. This analysis revealed a significant difference between trained and untrained providers on the child care information section of the two-part knowledge test developed for this project. Second, a subgroup of 99 home and center providers completed the knowledge questionnaire prior to and again after training. This pre-post comparison confirms the earlier finding of positive training impact. In this analysis, child care information scores improved significantly after training. In addition, a small group of nine home providers were observed in their own homes before and after training to assess possible behavioral outcomes. One third of the behavioral scales observed showed statistically significant improvements after training.

Furthermore, findings suggested two additional outcomes; (1) expansion of provider contacts with appropriate community resources and (2) an increased

sense of professionalism. Providers came to view each other as resources for consultation and joined local child care organizations.

Conclusions

Frequently, a packaged training program is utilized for all types of providers, sometimes due to time and resource constraints. A major theme of our program has been the assumption that a match should be achieved between the needs of local providers and the type of training offered to them. Further, it was assumed that persons educated and experienced in child care, who are hired and administered at the local level, can best achieve such a match.

The current project attained its goals despite the logistics involved in decentralized implementation and the limitations of a six-month time schedule. The project's model has therefore emerged as a practical approach. Our data suggest that professionals in the child care field can effectively train providers without the benefit of packaged curricula or standardized training formats. Additionally, it appears that if the trainer is a professional in the child care field, a dimension is added that an outside trainer may not provide. In essence, the trainers in this project provided modelling, encouraged networking, gave relevant examples, and modified information to fit particular providers in their courses.

It is important to explore the characteristics of successful programs so that we can lend our support to program models that will enable increasing numbers of providers to obtain professional training that enhances the quality of day care available to children and their parents.

TABLE 1

Selected Information by Training Institutions

<u>Subcontractor</u>	<u>Type of Institution</u>	<u>Number of Classes</u>	<u>Number Enrolled</u>	<u>Credit Option</u>
Alma Day Care	Private non-profit day care provider organization	6	96	No
Alpena Community College	Two-year community college	2	27	Yes
Delta College	Two-year community college	7 ³	118	Yes
Family and Consumer Resources/WSU	Four-year state university	1	14	Yes
Family Day Care Council of Mich., Inc.	Private non-profit corporation	5	64	Yes
Grand Traverse 4-C	Private non-profit corporation	7	124	Yes
Grand Valley State College/ Kirkhof College	Four-year state college	10	186	Yes
Kalamazoo Valley Community College	Two-year community college	10	179	Yes
Kirtland Community College	Two-year community college	4	39	Yes
Lake Superior State College	Four-year state college	7	135	Yes
Mercy College	Private four-year college	12	230	Yes
Mott Community College	Two-year community college	7	110	No
Saginaw Intermediate School District	Intermediate school district	5	108	No
University of Michigan	Four-year state university	8	141	Yes
Wayne County Community College	Two-year community college	5	91	Yes

TABLE 2
SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS
OF TRAINEES, N= 1423

<u>TYPE OF PROVIDER</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>WORK LOCATION</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Home	32.2	Rural/small town	24.4
Center	63.3	Small city	17.0
Unspecified	4.5	Medium-sized city	29.0
		Suburb	12.2
		Large city	17.4
	Total 100.0		Total 100.0
<u>SEX OF PROVIDER</u>	<u>Percentage</u>		
Male	3.8		
Female	96.2		
	Total 100.0		
<u>AGE</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>ETHNICITY</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Under 21	10.8	Black/Afro-American	21.6
21-30	42.3	White	72.6
31-40	28.0	Hispanic	3.4
41-50	10.8	Native American Indian	.9
Over 50	8.1	Oriental and Other	1.5
	Total 100.0		Total 100.0

<u>EDUCATION</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	
Elementary School	2.6	No College
Some High School	13.4	48.4%
H.S. Diploma or G.E.D.	32.4	
Some College	30.0	Some College
Assoc. of Arts	4.8	51.6%
Bachelor's Degree	8.7	
Some M.A. Credits	6.4	
Master's Degree	..7	
	Total 100.0	

TABLE 3

Educational and Professional
Characteristics of the Trainers

<u>Education</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
No Degree or Diploma	1	2.7
High School Diploma	2	5.4
Bachelor's Degree	11	29.7
Master's Degree	20	54.1
Ph.D. Degree	3	8.1
Total	37 ^a	100.0

Trainers with College Degrees: Major Field

	<u>N</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Early Childhood Education/Education	20	58.8
Human Development/ Home Economics	11	32.4
Unrelated Fields	3	8.8
Total	34	100.0

Day Care Provider Experience

	<u>N</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	33	86.8
No	5	13.2
Total	38 ^b	100.0

Membership in Early Childhood Organizations

	<u>N</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Yes	23	60.6
No or unspecified	15	39.5
Total	38 ^b	100.0

^a Data was unavailable for five trainers

^b Data was unavailable for four trainers

TABLE 4
 TRAINEE KNOWLEDGE TEST SCORES
 BEFORE AND AFTER TRAINING

MANOVA RESULTS			
	DE	E	SIG
MULTIVARIATE TEST	2.97	3.03	<.05
UNIVARIATE F-TEST			
CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY	1.98	.41	N.S.
CHILD CARE INFORMATION	1.98	6.06	<.016
MEAN SCORES			
TEST SECTION	HIGHEST SCORE POSSIBLE	MEAN SCORES	
		PRETEST	POSTTEST
CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY	5	3.88	4.03
CHILD CARE INFORMATION	12	8.56	8.91
		N=99	N=99

TABLE 5
COMPARISON OF TRAINED AND UNTRAINED
HOME PROVIDERS' KNOWLEDGE TEST SCORES

MANOVA RESULTS			
	DE	E	SIG
MULTIVARIATE TEST	2,476	2.72	($p < .067$)
UNIVARIATE F-TESTS			
CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY	1,477	.68	N.S.
CHILD CARE INFORMATION	1,477	5.42	$p < .02$
MEAN SCORES			
TEST SECTION	HIGHEST SCORE POSSIBLE	MEAN SCORE	
		UNTRAINED	TRAINED
CHILD CARE PHILOSOPHY	5	4.03	4.06
CHILD CARE INFORMATION	12	8.86	9.30
		N=140	N=339

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